

December 2018

Dear Friends and Family,

This year definitely takes the cake for being the most difficult and challenging. In saying that, our prayer as we look ahead to 2019 is that it would be a year of God-ordained change for the country of Nicaragua.

What has been difficult? Losing friends, feeling helpless in this new political situation, feeling angry at the injustice that surrounds us, heightened fear of theft or violence.

What has been challenging? Having a new baby, raising five children amidst this political crisis, changes in ministry with the sale of the sports center, scholarshiped university students struggling to study because of the government repression.

Because these last six months have been so different from all the years that I have lived and served in Nicaragua, I just want to share two journal entries of mine, one personal and one more thought provoking.

Journal entry June 2018

Some days I don't want to live here anymore, but I'm not sure where I want to live so it's not like I'm looking to go to another place. I'm just tired of living in this daily unknown and the new heightened threat of theft and violence and the daily news of attacks and death and finally the unknown of when it will end and what the results will be. At other times I feel like I have no purpose here now. So much has changed with the sports center--all good things, but they don't really need me and I'm not sure how much I want to be involved anyways. But then what am I doing? I'm praying about this over my last weeks of pregnancy, and I've felt God telling me to just "be." Be a mom, be a wife, be a follower of Jesus, be a seeker of truth and a lover of justice. Just be. That is not easy for me. I want to do, to accomplish, to cross off my lists, to finish; not just be. In the end I don't really think I want to leave. I just want to find purpose in being here. I want this country to find the peace and democracy that it deserves.

Journal entry September 2018

"Have you ever had to endure hunger?" the farmer asked my husband. I heard the question as I sat down with a large hot plate of food that his wife had just prepared for all of us. Rice, beans, chicken with vegetables, and a hot tortilla. I wondered what the farmer's experience had been. He went on to tell us how scarce food and money had been here in Nicaragua in the 80's. He would go days without any real food. Once he said it was almost a week. Sometimes he would find work that paid him enough to buy a liter of milk. Because they had a little girl, he would give 1/2 the liter to his wife so that she could feed their little girl. The other half they watered down to make it last for themselves. Sometimes they had money but since food was scarce, they could not find what they needed. With the current political unrest many fear that what happened in the 80's might happen again. At one point he looked up at me as if to get my thoughts on hunger, and all I could say was, "I cannot imagine what that must have been like. Honestly, I've never experienced hunger." As I said it I remember thinking that the only hunger I've ever known is not eating breakfast and realizing how hungry I was at lunch time. That, I recognize is not true hunger.

So in the midst of the difficulty and the challenging, we press on. I continue to pay scholarships for university students who are studying, and I am still involved with Word of Life, the new owners of the sports center. Thomas continues faithfully in his work at the Nicaragua Christian Academy and recently started his Saturday afternoon soccer league. In a country where the economy is on the verge of collapse, where there have been over 300 deaths since April and where currently there are over 500 political prisoners, the government claims that all is normal. We know that nothing is normal right now, but we press on daily praying for God to bring good change to this country and its people. We would appreciate your prayers too. Please pray for Nicaragua and her future, for true peace and for a long lasting resolution to this crisis. Please pray for the people here and for the waning economy. Please pray for us, for wisdom and protection and for God's guidance in all we do.

Praying for peace,

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